

Virginia Wildlife

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Virginia Wildlife

*Dedicated to the Conservation of
Virginia's Wildlife and Related Natural Resources
and to the Betterment of
Outdoor Recreation in Virginia*

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PUBLICATION OFFICE: Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 4010 W. Broad St., Richmond, Virginia

JAMES F. MCINTEER, JR. *Editor*
ANN E. PILCHER *Editorial Assistant*
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NOVEMBER

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COVER: The Japanese green pheasant is one of several varieties of pheasants hunters may find during the special open season November 16 and 17. Only cock birds will be legal game, the limit one bird a day, and each must be checked at a game checking station. Biologists hope to gain valuable information on the success of the stocking program and the distribution of pheasants in Virginia. Our artist: Daniel Feaser, Alexandria.

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A Yellow Page from a Musty File

THE value of birds, from an economic standpoint as destroyers of insects, is undoubtedly such as to entitle almost every kind of bird to some protection, some of them to continuous protection from one year's end to the other, some of them, our game birds, to partial protection.

Why I say our game birds are entitled only to partial protection is because through their taking comes values that cannot be expressed in words or figures, and that far exceed the value of their continuous lifework, as measured in dollars and cents.

One of these values is the recreation and outdoor exercise furnished the hunter, which means better health and therefore better citizenship.

Doctor Hornaday has said: "The great value of the game birds of America lies not in their meat pounds as they lie upon the table, but in the temptation they annually put before millions of field-weary farmers and desk-weary clerks and merchants to get into their beloved hunting togs, stalk out into the lap of nature, and say, 'Begone, dull care!' And a man who has had a day in the painted woods, on the bright waters of a duck-haunted pond, or in the golden stubble . . . can fill his day and his soul with six good birds just as well as he can with sixty."

And it matters not whether you are a hunter. What man has not felt, after a long grind at any kind of work, the keen pleasure of preparing for a trip in the open? The wild life is a part of the open, and its presence there will add many fold to its attractiveness. With what keen joy does the individual, returning to his work from such a trip, tell of the game he has bagged, the wild life he has taken pictures of, or just observed! What man can come in contact with our bird life, observe their beautiful forms, their color, hear their songs, witness their wonderful attainments of flight, their skill in nest building and consider that especially mysterious power that directs their movements known as migration, and not feel an uplift of his soul and marvel at the goodness and the greatness of the Creator of this life?

From the First Annual Report of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, June 30, 1917.

LETTERS

A Bit of Doggerel

IN the September *Virginia Wildlife* an interesting article by Bill Weekes of Martinsville begins with a quotation from Havelock Ellis:

"The sun, moon and stars would have disappeared long ago had they been within reach of predatory human hands."

It reminds me of a bit of doggerel which I read as a child more than sixty years ago and have not forgotten:

"I'm very glad the sun and moon are hung up there so high

That no presumptuous hand can reach and take them from the sky.

If they were not, there is no doubt that some reforming ass

Would try to have them taken down and light the world with gas."

The first quotation regards man as a predator against nature; the second puts the finger on the compulsive do-gooder. They are equally destructive.

It is to be regretted that not all public moneys are used to as good purposes as in publishing *Virginia Wildlife*. Thank you for an hour of relief each month from the vulgarities of the contemporary world.

C. Glenn Whitlock
Culpeper

Silent Guns

LAST year Virginia's hunters ended the lives of eight of their fellow companions. Altogether, 69 hunters were involved in accidents.

To the average hunter, these statistics mean nothing. But . . . there are eight families in Virginia that have suffered more than anyone can dream of.

When the Trooper or Law Officer walks up to the door and informs a young mother that her husband (only 34 years old) has been shot and killed by a hunter who thought he looked a lot like a deer, that's when hell begins for a family of a STATISTIC.

There is no income at this household. There is no one to mow the lawn. Who will take care of the leaking faucet? Who will paint the trim work on the house? Who will fix the bicycle? Who will be the bravest man in the whole world to a frightened family in the midst of a thunderstorm? This family's STATISTIC is very real and is sadly missed. He will never do any of the things he enjoyed doing. He is a STATISTIC because he moved in the brush and a hunter thought he looked like a deer.

This type of accident can be prevented. KNOW *what* you shoot. If there is any doubt —DON'T SHOOT. It's better to miss a deer than to hit a man.

Robert L. Huffman
Waynesboro

RABBITS are No. 1 in his book

By BILL COCHRAN
Roanoke

TO a beagle owner like Harley Conner, the charm and fascination of rabbit hunting is so strong that annually he'll burn up a case of shells and wear out a pair of hunting britches scurrying bunnies out of the brier patches. Conner, a 74-year-old farmer from the Shawsville area, goes through rabbit cover like a one man army, kicking brush piles, throwing sticks into brier tangles and clucking encouragement to his beagles. The rabbits might as well surrender.

Hunting with him in Montgomery County, one day late into the past season, Alvis McKinney and I soon discovered that it's as much fun to watch a man like Conner as to watch one of his beagles yapping at the heels of a rabbit. We hadn't been afield more than 10 minutes when Alvis kicked a brush pile and a rabbit squirted out of it almost from under his foot.

"There goes one," Alvis shouted.

Conner, standing beside me, whirled on his heels, snapped off a shot with his battered Remington automatic and the bunny went tumbling end over end. It was an impressive shot.

"Why didn't you shoot?" Conner asked me.

"I thought it was too far away," I said, with mouth still agape.

Conner just grinned, bit off a chew of tobacco, then started off after another rabbit, limping slightly as he went. Alvis retrieved the downed bunny, putting it in a bread bag.

"Best thing in the world to carry a rabbit in," he explained. "Won't get your hunting coat messed up."

We climbed a wooded ridge and into a field grown thick with brown grass and dotted with dwarf yellow pines. Conner's five beagles began casting back and forth across the field like ants covering a picnic table in search of crumbs.

Suddenly, the little dogs jumped a rabbit and opened up



Bread bag makes a handy wrapper for freshly shot rabbit.

with the kind of music that's sweet on the ears of a beagle man. The three of us picked a spot along the field and waited. Pushed by dogs, a rabbit will almost invariably circle back.

But this one didn't get a chance to go far. The stillness of the setting was suddenly ripped by a shot. The rabbit had made the mistake of running toward Conner. Mark off another rabbit.

"He hasn't missed one since 1947," quipped Alvis.

"Heck, I miss my share," Conner said, stuffing the rabbit into a bread bag.

"You fellows go on down into the hollow while I go chat with Willie for a minute," he told us. Willie was the landowner cutting wood in a nearby lot while his wife hauled it to the house on a pony pulled sleigh.

Alvis and I went down a ridge which led to a grown-over

Left: Harley Conner goes through rabbit cover like a one man army. Right: Alvis McKinney searches hollow for bunnies.





Beagles scurry in and out of the brush doing most of the work.

hollow field with shaggy apple trees and berry thickets running wild—a perfect place for rabbits. Given food and cover, rabbits will prosper. Little wonder, then, that fondness of rabbit hunting is something shared by millions of sportsmen across the country. Rabbits are considered the nation's No. 1 game animal. They cause hunters to drive farther, hunt longer, and spend more money than any other game.

In Virginia, they take second place to the squirrel in popularity, according to a survey by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, but not in the hearts of men like Conner. To them, they are No. 1.

The hollow field proved to be productive. The beagles quickly got a rabbit up which Alvis bagged as it sped across a small opening.

By then, Conner was coming down the ridge to join us. Suddenly, we heard his gun boom.

"There's another rabbit in the bag," I said. And it was.

Shortly afterwards, the best chase of the day began. The beagles flushed a rabbit in the hollow which sped up the hillside in a zigzag course. The hounds took after it as fast as their short legs would carry them, giving tongue all the way. We stood listening as the bellowing faded and grew, faded and grew.

McKinney retrieves rabbit as beagle watches with interest.



This is a leisurely and charming way to hunt, as you let the likable little beagles do most of the work for you. It is even more exciting if you own the dogs, having cared for them all year long for a moment like this. Then you can recognize what each hound is doing—or not doing—as you hear the bass voice of an old faithful beagle and the tenor yelps of a promising pup.

I spotted the rabbit once, too far away for a shot. He wasn't running hard, but just hopping along, his ears waving back and forth, listening to the hounds as they unraveled his trail. It was almost as if he were enjoying it.

Several times the dogs temporarily lost the track, then they'd pick it up again in a symphony of hound music, led by old Roger, a one-eyed beagle.

The bunny went to the top of the ridge, then headed back. Boom! Boom! Conner had another one.

"He must be slipping. He took two shots for that one," Alvis joked.

We'd been out only three hours. It was not yet noon. All morning the clouds had been thickening and now it began to rain—and hard. We were headed in the direction of the car when the beagles scurried up another rabbit.

"You boys take care of that one. I'm going to the car,"



Roanoke hunter Garland Wright with two plump bunnies.

Conner told us. Alvis explained that Conner had a cold.

"I'd hate to try and keep up with him when he's feeling well," I said.

"Most days he'll stay out plumb till dark," Alvis, a frequent hunting partner of Conner, explained. "I'll say, 'Let's go.' He'll say, 'Let's try right over here.'"

Ripping through the wet grass, the beagles sent a bunny in my direction and I dropped it with a blast from my 20 gauge. It had been a great morning for us. We'd gotten every rabbit we flushed, and the weight of our game felt good as we headed toward the car, wet, but happy.

We sat in the car, thinking that the rain might stop and allow us to return to the cover. The windows steamed up, molding us into a little world all our own. It didn't stop raining. That was the end of the hunt. But no matter. The glow of the morning would last well into the afternoon. No wonder so many people rate the rabbit No. 1.



L. L. Rue III photo

HUNTING COON

By BILL WEEKES
Blacksburg

THE stars flecked the inverted dark bowl above. The bawling of dogs swelled forlorn echoes over black hills silhouetted against the gray sky.

"A-wooooo! A-wooooo!"

The dogs, four of them, bayed across a hollow to a group of men standing on a dirt road near a car. To them, the sounds of the hounds were like Siren calls to Ulysses, irresistible.

"Smokey's on the trail. He's got a good track," one of them uttered.

"A-wooooo! A-wooooo!"

"Damn good track," another agreed.

The howling increased in tempo and gusto. The trail was getting hotter. The men knew it and were excited.

"HEEEEEEE-OWWWW!" cried out the owner of Smokey. He was encouraging his faraway canine.

"Speak to them Lady!" shouted a third man, cupping his hands to his mouth.

The four men, knotted together for warmth against a frigid December night, issued a running commentary to complement the running barks of their dogs. Each was bent on throwing out his own interpretation of the events transpiring out there in the inky woodland. A hint of boastfulness flavored their pronouncements.

They were coon hunters, a particular breed of sportsman; the only hunters who see with their ears, whose weapons are embodied in the savvy and tenaciousness of their animals, the coon dogs. No other season runs so long (October 1 to March 10 in Patrick, where they were hunting. In no other

sport does the call of the wild speak so blatantly to the hunter.

"A-woooo! A-woooo!"

The bawling changed in resonance. The hunters acknowledged this to one another. The barking had become deeper and more drawn out—a guttural wail.

"Ya reckon that's a tree bark, Hender?" Lady's owner inquired.

"Ah. I don't know. Sounds like it, but you'd better wait. It might be a tap, Coy."

The man who last spoke seemed older and wiser in these matters and advised a "wait and see" policy, better known as "letting them (the dogs) get satisfied" with knowing they had a coon up the tree. Hender Saul of Martinsville has hunted coon for 20 years and has owned about 100 hounds in his time. He knew a good dog when he saw one. He also knew an old mountain coon was wise and full of tricks, that one could run a pack of dogs half the night over several miles.

"You don't get every coon you go after, not by a long shot," he has explained. "You never know what to expect from them. They'll hide in honeysuckle, circle back, swim rivers, crosscross creeks—a lot of good hounds have been drowned. There's no way to figure them out."

The raccoon is hell-bent to throw the pursuing hounds off his track. His favorite trick is tree tapping; that is, running up a tree and either jumping off onto another, down to the ground, or coming down the other side and escaping. This ruse is designed to confuse the dogs, making them think the coon is still hiding up in the tree somewhere.

The men listened to the steady long howls of the dogs. After a pregnant pause, a new cry arose, a crisper, higher-pitched running bark.

"That's Smokey," exclaimed Hender with a chuckle. "He's found him a new trail. It was a tap after all."

Saul's outspoken Black 'N Tan had circled the tree and discovered where the coon had jumped off, landed and had scurried away. The other dogs—which included Hender's Black 'N Tan "Sam" and Red Tick "Red"—aped Smokey, the dog that strikes first 95 percent of the time. The hunters leaned back and waited some more.

From the left, Mike Easter of Martinsville, Buster Saul of Bassett, and Hender Saul of Martinsville trek down road to sound of coon dogs.





Treed, 15 to 20 feet above the ground.

The "listening hunt" was soon to transform into a "chasing hunt."

The dogs struck a tree bark again further away and Hender sent Coy Young of Bassett on into the woods to see if the dogs had a coon. Sometimes, to the embarrassment to their owners, coon dogs sometimes isolate a possum instead.

Twenty minutes passed and the distant cry by Coy was the signal the dogs had indeed treed a masked mammal. While Hender stayed at the car, the other two hunters, Buster Saul, Hender's nephew, and this writer set out into the tangled woodland in the direction of the beckoning outcry of the dogs.

"If you like dogs, it's the most challenging hunting you have," Hender has said. "It's a rugged way of hunting. You've got to be in good physical shape."

With a .22 rifle slung over shoulder and gas lantern in hand, Buster led the way. The light from the lantern made the underbrush and trees shadow dance. Ivy-like vines proliferated the path, snaking down from trees, twisting in confused bundles across the ground. We battled through the tangles for 15 to 20 minutes while the dog noises didn't seem to be getting any louder. Twigs had to be brushed aside; some slapped across our heads. Breaths became labored on steep inclines, a creek had to be traversed and then the terrain gently sloped down into a hollow. We could see Coy's spotlight playing atop a tall yellow poplar.

The raucous-sounding hounds leaped up the tree trunk and flashlights caught their tumbling figures. The frothy dogs bit at the dead stobs of lower limbs. Coy stepped back and drilled another stream of light near the top of the tree. A ball of fur could be discerned resting in the crotch of a big limb.

It didn't move. Buster blew a squaller, a wooden instrument that emits a raucous squall, the raccoon's call, when you blow it. The coon in the tree thinks there's another coon on the ground fighting with the dogs and he'll look down to see what's happening. It is then you can see his glowing eyes.

The coon did look and Hender later told his compatriots he had been able to see those shiny eyes all the way back at the car, two-tenths of a mile away.

But the coon didn't move. Buster and Coy took turns shooting bullets near the animal to encourage it to come down. Soon it did. Slowly the furry bundle descended, from time to time peeping around the trunk, his mask prominently displayed. Occasionally it stopped its descent to lick a paw while the dogs increased in their frenzy. Lady, Coy's B&T female, actually jumped on the trunk and crawled up it ten feet aboveground.

Soon the coon came down to the last limb, 25 feet above, and rested in its fork. After some minutes, Buster declared he would go up after the coon, which he did, knocking it off the limb to where the dogs engaged it in battle.

Climbing trees for coons is the lithe Bassett teenager's specialty. Three months later, the coon hunting season having expired in Henry and its surrounding counties, we went to the nearest county where the season is continuous—Halifax. There Buster again was to demonstrate his skill as human fly.

In the area around South Boston one finds a different sort of coon—the smaller (and some say the less intelligent) swamp coon. For the dogs it is a different type of hunting. There are many more coons, therefore many more criss-crossing tracks to confuse the dogs and perhaps make them think a coon is where a coon isn't. The human hunter must follow his dogs across flatter and wetter terrain.

The mid-March night at South Boston was warm. Rains had swelled the succession of pools and puddles we would have to wade through or avoid. This time Mike Easter of Martinsville accompanied Buster, Hender and myself. Hender had not been to the area to hunt coon for several years and so he was going more or less on memory to a place where he thought there would be good hunting. Not surprisingly we made a wrong turn and came upon a farmer's house. He had just come home from somewhere and was in the front yard. As Hender conversed with him, the farmer invited us to hunt his land.

We accepted, thanked him and pulled into a cow pasture and let the dogs out. Minutes later they let out howls. The populous coon had been out early that night. Again Hender stayed back while the rest ventured into the woods toward where we thought we had a tree bark. Twenty minutes after entering the woods, however, the barking stopped and we stopped our hiking and waited. Hender's distant cry told us the dogs were treeing beyond our earshot in the direc-

(Continued on page 21)

Red knows he is up there.



PHELPS HEADS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



Dementi Studio photo
Chester F. Phelps

CHESTER F. PHELPS, Executive Director of the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, was elected President of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners near the close of that group's 1970 meeting in New York City. The group is made up of Directors from the 50 states, plus Canadian provinces and a few foreign countries. Phelps was elected to the Association's executive committee in 1965, then to vice chairman and chairman of that committee. He subsequently served as second Vice-President and first Vice-President. He said in his acceptance speech, "My election to this post is the highest professional honor to which I could aspire."

Phelps is the first Virginian to serve as President of the International Association in its 60 year history. He holds a B.S. degree in forestry from North Carolina State College, and a master's degree in wildlife management from Virginia Tech. He has served with the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries for more than thirty years, and was Chief of the Commission's Game Division before being named Executive Director in 1958.

"I was very happy to hear of Chester Phelps' election as President of the International Association," said Doctor Custis L. Coleman, Chairman of the Virginia Commission. "Mr. Phelps is an outstanding professional in the field of game and fish conservation and management, and he will make the International Association a fine president. We are proud to have our Executive Director serving in this important post."

The International Association has addressed itself to a number of pressing conservation problems over the years, one of the most recent of which was the question of state jurisdiction over fish and game on federal lands.

Congratulations, Camp Pickett!

VIRGINIA'S Camp Pickett beat out all other Defense Department installations throughout the nation to win the coveted Secretary of Defense Conservation Award for 1969 in recognition of the outstanding natural resource conservation and development program in effect on Pickett's 45,000 acre military reservation.



Ft. Lee Quartermaster
Center photo by Riffe & Horn

Colonel William C. McMullin, Camp Pickett commander, accepts award trophy from Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird.

In the eight-year history of the Secretary of Defense Conservation Award, this year's presentation is the first to be made personally by the Secretary on the grounds of the winning installation.

"I chose to come to Camp Pickett today to emphasize the high priority which the Department of Defense accords to conservation of the land and to improvement of the environment," said Secretary Melvin R. Laird in his presentation address.

Colonel William C. McMullin, commanding officer at Camp Pickett, accepted the award. Camp Pickett is part of the Army Quartermaster Center headquartered at Fort Lee.

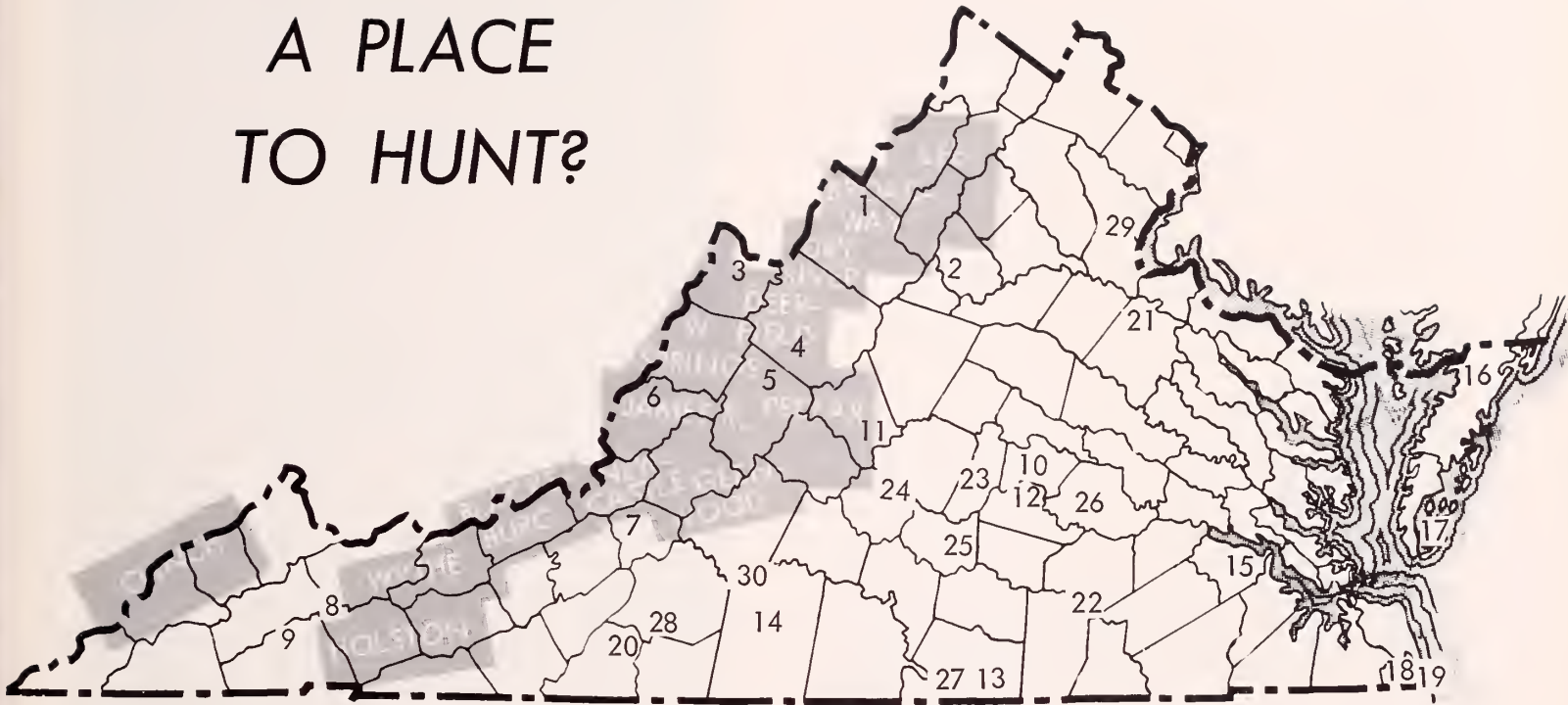
"I think this is a tremendous achievement. It reflects credit not only upon the Department of the Army but upon the State of Virginia," Colonel McMullin said. "State as well as Federal agencies have worked with us in developing and maintaining an outstanding conservation program that encompasses land management, woodland management, and fish and wildlife programs."

The signing of a cooperative agreement with the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries in 1956 marked the beginning of the conservation program currently in effect at Camp Pickett.

Camp Pickett's vigorous resources management effort is seen as an important adjunct to its military mission, which includes the provision of a maneuver area and training

(Continued on page 22)

A PLACE TO HUNT?



There are Approximately 6 Acres of Public Hunting Land for Each Licensed Virginia Hunter

The Jefferson* and George Washington* National Forests, shown in individual ranger districts above, contain a million and a half acres of prime hunting territory managed for sustained game production by the Virginia Game Commission and the U. S. Forest Service and open for your hunting pleasure with the purchase of a one dollar National Forest Permit obtainable from any hunting license agent.

The Game Commission owns over 140,000 acres of versatile hunting land purchased with your hunting license dollars and open for your hunting enjoyment without any fees (except 18 & 19 below).

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Wunder Wildlife Management Area* | 9. Hidden Valley Wildlife Management Area* | 15. Hog Island Waterfowl Management Area* |
| 2. Rapidan Wildlife Management Area* | 10. Powhatan Wildlife Management Area* | 16. Saxis Waterfowl Management Area |
| 3. Highland Wildlife Management Area* | 11. James River Wildlife Management Area* | 17. Mockhorn Island Wildlife Management Area |
| 4. Little North Mountain Wildlife Management Area* | 12. Amelia Wildlife Management Area* | 18. Trojan Waterfowl Management Area* |
| 5. Goshen Wildlife Management Area* | 13. Elm Hill Waterfowl Management Area | 19. Pocahontas Waterfowl Management Area* |
| 6. Gathright Wildlife Management Area* | 14. White Oak Mountain Wildlife Management Area* | 20. Fairystone Farms Wildlife Management Area* |
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| 8. Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area* | | |

Another quarter-million acres of hunting lands managed through cooperative agreements between your Game Commission and land managing agencies of state and federal government.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 21. A. P. Hill Military Reservation* | 25. Prince Edward State Forest* | 28. U. S. Corps of Engineer lands, Philpott Reservoir* |
| 22. Pickett Military Reservation* | 26. Pocahontas State Forest* | 29. Quantico Marine Reservation* |
| 23. Cumberland State Forest* | 27. U. S. Corps of Engineers lands, Kerr Reservoir* | 30. Smith Mountain Wildlife Management Area* |
| 24. Buckingham-Appomattox State Forest | | |

*Indicates maps are available from the Game Commission or other sources.

ALL of the hubbub about "women's lib" amuses Mrs. Pearl Hartley of Roanoke.

She has been a hunter and fisherman—two pursuits usually regarded as strictly for men—since she was a young woman.

When the early squirrel season opened September 15 in Franklin County, she was among the first hunters into the woods. By mid-morning, she had bagged two with her double-barreled 12-gauge shotgun.

She travels to Franklin for most of her hunting and fishing, and with good reason. She was brought up in the area. Her father operated a country store near the Scruggs community and she lived on the family farm nearby.

"First thing I ever shot was a snake that got into our chicken house," Mrs. Hartley recalls. Now in her mid-50's, she was in her 20's at that time.

Soon after she dispatched the snake, she bagged her first squirrel with her brother's shotgun. "My grandmother was staying with us. She just loved wild meat and so I decided to go out and get her some," she said.

To this day, squirrel hunting—and bass fishing—have remained her first loves, although she isn't averse to taking a crack at rabbits, quail, doves, ducks, crappie, catfish, carp and bream.

She wasn't proud of her total bag on her first dove hunt this season. She downed only one, but don't take this to mean that she's a poor marksman (or is it markswoman?).

THIS HUNTER-ANGLER IS A REAL "EQUAL"

She tries luck in a Smith Mountain Lake cove where she caught 5½-pound bass in the spring.



Mrs. Pearl Hartley slips through woods on lookout for squirrels—her favorite hunting.

By OZZIE WORLEY
Roanoke

Once she bagged two doves with the same shot. One day last year she felled her limit of 18 birds.

She uses a shotgun that she has owned for 25 years and which came from a mail order house. It's beginning to show its age, but you couldn't buy, beg or steal it from her.

Deer hunting is not included in her repertoire. "Too much walking's involved, and I have a touch of arthritis," she explained. "Besides, what would I do with one?"

She donates the squirrels, doves and other small game she shoots to friends and relatives.

"Give me squirrel hunting," she declared, "because I just love to sneak up on them when they're cutting."

Like hunting, she acquired the fishing bug when she was a girl and lived near where the Blackwater River and Gills Creek met in Franklin County.

Smith Mountain Lake covers much of this area now and offers a large variety of fish. But Mrs. Hartley had to settle for such fare as cats and eels when she cut her teeth as a fisherman (fisherwoman?).

After Smith Mountain came, she turned into a regular customer. She fishes there at least once a week, often with "Peekie," her Pekingese, as her only companion.

Casting from her own 14-foot boat, she prefers to fish in the Strawberry Banks or the old Saunders farm sections, both almost within hailing distance of her girlhood home.

Her luck has been spectacular, perhaps ranking a notch above her hunting success.

This year she holds the lead in the smallmouth bass



division of a "big fish" contest being conducted at a store near the lake. If her 5½-pound smallmouth holds on, she'll win a trophy.

She caught it in the spring on the very last minnow she had in her bucket.

Her favorite bass bait, however, are lizards.

She often fishes with Mrs. Lillian Wilson, a 65-year-old angler from Rt. 8, Roanoke. On one outing, they caught 39—some of them bass, but most crappie and bream.

"I usually catch bigger bass than she does, because I use lizards and she doesn't," says Mrs. Hartley, who doesn't hesitate to speak up about her abilities with gun and rod.

She is an employee of a Roanoke garment factory, where she has worked for 21 years. She has taken some ribbing from fellow workers there about her love of hunting and fishing.

"The fish just look at you and hit," she quoted her foreman.

She can take the kidding, especially the kind offered by a male worker at the factory. "Don't ask Pearl if she caught anything," he said; "just ask her HOW MANY she caught."

Her tackle is more sophisticated than it was in her youth, when she used bent pins for hooks. Now she sets forth with store-bought No. 1 hooks, spinning rods and closed-face pushbutton reels. She prefers 8-or-10-pound test line.

She believes her fishing technique has a great deal to do with her luck. She uses no sinkers, bobbers or other encumbrances on her line—just the hook and the bait. This allows the bait to move naturally in the water.

Mrs. Hartley bagged these squirrels opening day in Franklin County.



"Many people lose fish," she says, "because they jerk too quick and pull the bait away. Just move it a little bit when you feel a bump—like you're going to take it away from him—and he'll take it."

She keeps her boat, the "Miss Pearl," in a modest boat house built by her teen-age cousin. It's located in a cove that dips into a farm that is on the lake.

When trying her luck, Mrs. Hartley usually wears blue-jeans, and tops off her garb with a floppy "umbrella" straw hat. "I freckle easy," she pointed out.

Like most male anglers, she has a good stock of fishing stories.

Among them:

In 1967, she tumbled down the steps of her home while



She caught this 21-inch smallmouth bass in Claytor Lake in 1960.

heading outside to collect nightcrawlers for bait. She broke her leg, but that didn't stop her. Using crutches, she went fishing and landed three crappies.

Another time, she and her husband shot eight doves and caught eight bass the same day.

While on vacation this summer, she and Mr. Hartley landed 60 carp in the vicinity of the boathouse.

And still more:

While she was fishing with 13-year-old Michael Craighead of Roanoke, the lad started reeling like mad. He mumbled to Mrs. Hartley that his fish seemed so big he didn't know if he could pull it into the boat.

Mrs. Hartley couldn't answer, because she was battling a fish at the same time. Finally, she had a 17-inch largemouth flopping in the boat. Michael had a dour look. It turned out that the bass was on her hook, and the boy had snagged her line with his hook. Both were fighting the same fish.

During the summer, Mrs. Hartley sampled a private pond one day and caught a 12½-pound catfish on a 10-pound test line.

Her husband, Wayne Lee Hartley, is a barber at a Roanoke shop. "He likes to fish, too," his wife said, "but enjoys boat riding more."

Nevertheless, he has left the lake with some fine bass, including a 19½ incher he had mounted by a taxidermist. "But he's never caught a smallmouth as big as mine," his wife said.

What with her hunting and fishing pursuits, Mrs. Hartley rarely has time for other diversions.

"Nope, and I don't like to visit people, either," she says. "That's why I like to fish. They can't talk back to you."

GIVE

Virginia Wildlife

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CONSERVATIONGRAM

Commission Activities and Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

28,177 FISH AT CLINCH MOUNTAIN. A record total of 28,177 persons fished in the Game Commission's Clinch Mountain Fee Trout Fishing area on Big Tumbling Creek during the 1970 season. Crowds averaged over 300 per day on the Labor Day weekend when the facility closed for the year. The stream remains open through December 31 as a regular stocked trout stream.

Persons fishing in the area during the fee season, which begins the first Saturday in April, must purchase a \$1 daily fishing permit in addition to their fishing license. Trout licenses are not required, making the area attractive to non-resident tourists who can fish on a \$1.50 three day license not valid for trout elsewhere. The 300 acre Laurel Bed Lake constructed last year has proven nearly as popular as the stream. The extra fishing room created by the lake coupled with the added summer stream flow from the lake discharge helped to make the record fishing activity possible.

The Commission is in the process of purchasing 2,500 acres of land along the creek from Stuart Land and Cattle Company. The new tract straddles the Russell-Washington County line and will give the Commission title to all lands bordering the fee fishing portion of Big Tumbling Creek. The fishing rights had been leased on this portion of the stream previously. The purchase will protect the character of the stream, preventing any development in the valley which would detract from the fishing experience. The company has reserved the grazing rights for 12 years on the tract.

GAME COMMISSION BEGINS CONSTRUCTION OF RADIO NET. The first segment of a statewide radio network has been installed for the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries by the General Electric Company, the successful bidder on the project. The initial segment includes only the Hampton Roads district, which is served by two base stations and 19 mobile units of Game and Law Enforcement Divisions. Also included in the system are 5 portable units which can be used in boats or in the field, and a unit for the Commission's float plane stationed at Back Bay.

Equipment used in the system includes 80 watt mobile transmitters and 80 watt base stations. Tone coded repeater relays are used to extend the range of both base and mobile units. No timetable has been established for bringing the rest of the state under the single system instead of the 20 frequencies now being used in the various districts.

PORTIONS OF GATHRIGHT AREA CLOSED TO FISHING AND HUNTING. A portion of the Jackson River on the Game Commission's Gathright Wildlife Management Area has been closed to fishing and boating, and hunting is restricted in a portion of the the Gorge area due to construction activities on the Gathright Dam project, reports the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

ELM HILL AREA TO FEATURE GENERAL HUNTING. Resident game hunting will be permitted on the Game Commission's Elm Hill Waterfowl Management Area near Kerr Dam in Mecklenburg County for the first time this year. Except for dove hunting, which is permitted on Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout the established split season, hunting will be limited to the period from December 1 through January 5. All game species in season except waterfowl will be legal during this period on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons only.

The main purpose of the new policy is to disturb the approximately 1,000 waterfowl now using the area sufficiently that they will disperse and provide some shooting for waterfowl hunters on Kerr and Gaston Reservoirs.

Turkeys From Scratch

By BERNARD K. BANGLEY
Rockbridge Baths

"I WILL keep calm," I said to myself. "I will resist every urge to move so much as a muscle." The hesitant rustling drew nearer.

Unable to resist, I slowly turned my head for a peek. Much underbrush obscured my vision, but there was no question about it. My visitor was a gigantic wild turkey. He was out of range of my twelve gauge shotgun, but I pointed it in his direction anyway. I didn't want to frighten him off by any sudden movement just before I shot.

This was the first wild turkey I had ever seen on the ground in my life, and I had already lived perhaps half of it. It was the most magnificent bird I could imagine. There was something regal in its strut. I looked for a beard, but the distance was too great.

Then he saw me. Or rather, he saw a rotting stump with a bit of human shoulder and head exposed above it. He jutted his head forward with curiosity like a chicken; then drew it back and tiptoed off in the opposite direction. I followed him smoothly with my gun barrel.

He began to circle me, keeping essentially the same safe distance between us. Heavy brush would frequently hide him, but I could detect a flitting, ghost-like image. In five or ten minutes he had made about a quarter of a circle. My body had twisted into a cramped and awkward position, but I dared not move other than to continue swinging my gun slowly.

Suddenly, I lost sight of him. I knew he was still out there, but I couldn't say exactly where. It was as though a dynamite fuse had hissed and sputtered right down to the last inch and then gone out. Or had it? My arms ached from supporting the heavy gun. I lowered it carefully.

The kind of action I'd been having can only be described as "beginner's luck." I had never hunted turkeys before this day. I was born and reared in Suffolk, Virginia. Old-timers there would sometimes reminisce about how they used to see an occasional turkey, but nobody bothered to look for them anymore. I knew that there was still some good turkey hunting going on in various parts of the nation, but as far as I was personally concerned, they were extinct.

Now I had moved my family to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, where I became pastor of Bethesda Presbyterian Church at Rockbridge Baths. To my astonishment and delight, I found myself in turkey country.

About an hour before dawn, on the day of my first hunt, I was picked up in a jeep by one of my deacons, Carl Poole, and his friend, Joe Newcomer. They were both veteran turkey hunters and gave me some last minute instruction while we traveled.

The jeep bounced to a halt at the end of a dirt road. The first grey light of dawn was filtering through the trees. The air was still. The temperature was in the pleasant forties. Before us loomed Little North Mountain.

"Little" is a relative, not a descriptive, term. From its southern end at Goshen Pass, it stretches thirty-two miles

to the horizon. Much of it (16,225 acres) is public land held by the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and is known as the Little North Mountain Wildlife Management Area. The quality of hunting here draws men from several states. Two state deer trophies have been bagged on Little North Mountain.

Carl gave us his plan. Joe was to head into the mountain to the right. I was to climb half-way up it straight ahead, and he would work in a semicircle to the left, beginning low and working higher.



We split up and began the necessary walking. To be honest, I did not expect to see a turkey. The season had been in for a week and results had been poor. Only three had been checked in at a station near my home. The newspapers reported that late frosts had reduced the mast crop the year before, and that spring rains had killed many young poults in the nest that year. The population was definitely reduced and hunter success was confirming it.

The sun finally made it up, tinting the few clouds overhead with a bright orange. I was alone now. Alone in the woods. I knew that this would be a great day even without



HOW BIG DID THEY GET?

By WALLACE OBAUGH
Hinton

ONCE I almost lost a nickel. A man with whom I was working asked why wild turkeys do not get as big as they used to. I told him I supposed they do. He said that he had read in his school history that the early colonists found them weighing up to forty-five pounds.

I had missed that lesson, or had forgotten it. Perhaps we had different books. Since the best wild gobblers shot today weigh a very few pounds over twenty, talk of forty-five pounders sounded like a lot of turkey. The domestic breeds have been developed for meat production, and forty-five pounds is moderately hefty for a tame tom. So I figured that my friend had disremembered, and offered to bet him a nickel that he couldn't show me that statement in a history book.

He said he would be glad to bet, but he hadn't kept the book.

Since then I have learned a little about the birds and bees from both books and observation. I like the old books best—the ones describing our country, with its animal and plant life, in early times. In several of these I find statements of support for those big gobblers.

The first I found was in *The Travels of William Bartram*.

Mr. Bartram was a botanist, and in 1773 he made a trip through the southern states for, as he says, "the discovery of rare and useful productions of nature, chiefly in the vegetable kingdom." But his training in one science speaks at least careful reporting in the field of another. Here is what he says about wild turkeys:

"I saw here [in Georgia] a remarkably large turkey of the native wild breed; his head was above three feet from the ground when he stood erect; he was a stately beautiful bird of a very dusky brown color. * * * He was reared from an egg found in the forest, and hatched by a hen of the common domestic fowl. * * * I have seen several wild turkeys that have weighed between twenty and thirty pounds, and some have been killed that weighed near forty."

The next paragraph, from the same book, contributes nothing to the question at hand, but gives a picture of the former abundance of the big birds. The scene is in Florida, near St. Augustine:

"Having rested well during the night, I was awakened in the morning early by the cheering converse of the wild turkey cocks saluting each other from the sun-brightened tops of the lofty cypress and magnolia trees. They begin at early dawn, and continue until sunrise, from March to the last of April. The high forests ring with the noise of these social sentinels, the watchword being caught and repeated, from one bird to another, for hundreds of miles around, so that the whole country is for an hour or more in a universal shout."

John James Audubon comes to mind as one whose witness should be sought. Here it is. The time he speaks of,

any shooting.

The dry leaves under foot rattled much too noisily. It hadn't rained since most of them fell and they would have given a moccasin-footed Indian quite a challenge. It was annoying. I could not have alerted the inhabitants of Little North Mountain any more efficiently by sending heralds before me to blast away on trumpets!

Suddenly I froze in my tracks. I had come to the top of a small ridge leading toward the crest of the mountain. At my feet was an area scratched bare of leaves to the dirt.

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Turkeys from Scratch (Continued from page 15)

It was about two feet wide and three or four feet long, beginning at the side of a fallen tree limb.

Looking around, I saw that the hill was actually peppered with such scratching. I felt like I was standing in a barnyard. I couldn't believe it, but I had stumbled upon one of the turkeys' favorite feeding grounds. The scratching looked quite fresh. If they had been here in the last day or two, they might come today also. There was obviously no future in stomping through brittle leaves which thundered with every footfall. I decided to wait.

The remains of a large stump provided a blind which commanded a view of most of the scratching ground. Laying the shotgun across my knees, I began a long vigil.

A leaf fell to the ground with a crash. Others joined it in lazy staccato.

In about three-quarters of an hour, the songbirds began to return. I hadn't realized that I had frightened them away. Soon the forest around me was alive with activity and chatter. A towhee thrashed around under a brush pile. A downy woodpecker hammered away at a sapling directly in front of me. Squirrels began to scamper about. Two hundred yards distant a buck moved precisely along the contour of the mountain. I ate a pear I had brought in my pocket.

Then I heard Carl shoot. Once. About a mile away. He had found turkeys. I waited for more shots, but they didn't come.

After about two hours, I heard him coming up the side of the ridge. He was making a lot of noise. His feet trudged steadily, one crunch after the other. He was coming right to me. Soon his head would pop over the crest. I stood up, stretched, took two steps forward, and what I thought was Carl Poole exploded into two streamlined but bulky birds and a swirl of colored leaves.

Turkeys!

By the time I had my gun shouldered and the safety off, they were at the treetops. I aimed ahead of the closest one and fired. Nothing happened. I fired again. Not a feather fell. Quickly, I got off the third shot. Rotten luck!

To my utter amazement, they didn't continue flying. They landed. Not more than seventy-five yards away they were on the ground again. It was as though they knew I had emptied my gun and found flying too strenuous to bother about.

I fumbled for more shells and ran uphill after them. They stretched out their necks, took a few giant strides, and disappeared mercurially.

I returned to my stump. It appeared as though I had found the turkey's Grand Central Station, and I had faith in it now as a stand. But as I waited, hope faded. I felt like John the Baptist in Herod's cistern. It really was asking too much to sight another turkey at the same spot the same day. Many had hunted all week and had seen nothing.

But lightning struck twice that day. In less than forty-five minutes, I heard another one coming. This time from behind. He is the one I told you about in the beginning. I referred to him as the first one I had ever seen on the ground, because I can't really say that I "saw" the other two. This one I studied. He took his time, and I soaked him in with every sense at my disposal. For the moment he had vanished, but I knew he had not departed. He was out there, somewhere.

What now? In my shirt pocket was a piece of slate and an ingenious wooden device Carl had made and given me—a turkey caller. There are several types, but this is one of

the most compact and it is easy for a beginner to use without making too many sour notes. I had practiced a bit on it at home, but had little confidence that it would result in any turkeys. I did know that the turkey's one shortcoming is his innate curiosity and flocking instinct.

I decided to give it a try. I eased it out and scratched gently against the slate. The call I gave was very soft, and I only sounded it twice.

It worked! The big gobbler walked out into the open and glared my way. His beard swayed like a pendulum. I raised my gun as imperceptibly as I could. My heart began to race.

He came a few steps closer. I eased the safety off. How far away was he? I wasn't really sure. I wasn't prepared to see a bird this big—perhaps twenty pounds or more. There was a lot of brush between us. I estimated sixty yards. "Wait," I advised myself. "Wait. Please wait."

His head came into clear view between two trees. I had a perfect bead on him. I couldn't stand it.

I fired.

Incredible as it sounds, I missed. (Later, I saw that my shot had gone to the left despite my careful aim. A neat crescent was sliced out of the bark of a nearby tree. I have some ideas on why this happened, but yours are probably less biased.)

The great bird crouched and sprang into the air. I pumped in a second shell and fired, but I was off balance. He came directly over me, going fast, but not too high. I gave him a good lead from a standing position and threw my last shot at him. Anybody reading this would have brought him down. As painful as it is for me to admit, my shot had no visible effect. It was as though I were shooting blanks.

He locked his wings into a kind of inverted dihedral and, skimming the trees, sailed off down the mountain.

Terrible shooting, yes. But even lousier self-control. The rule, I learned, was this: *If he's coming toward you, wait; if he's going away, shoot.*

Carl was nice about it. He did not chide. He even gave me half of his turkey. It was sweet beyond my wildest imagination. And tender. No fowl I have ever eaten compares with it. The fever got in my blood. Meat of this quality, combined with the sheer challenge to hunting skill involved in turkey hunting, drove me to the point of distraction.

I resolved to return to Little North Mountain.

Five days later I was there. Venus was a torch of molten fire in the eastern sky as I took a stand on the same feeding grounds I had hunted before. It was much colder this morning and a brisk wind made it penetrate. The first rays of sunshine helped a little, but not much. My hunting companion on this trip was the County Deputy Sheriff, Clarence Tolley. This time, I abandoned the hollow stump. It had been too awkward. I decided to stand, literally. I leaned against a large oak and began to listen.

The leaves were still noisy, but the wind made it difficult for me to tell clearly what was going on and where. Several times my hopes would rise and be dashed. Squirrels made a lot of "static."

I scoured the slate of my turkey caller with sandpaper and gave it a stroke or two with the wooden instrument. The sound came out hoarse and in spurts.

It exposed the first turkey of the day. Frightened it away. It had been standing perfectly still about 150 yards off.

Should I go after it, or should I stay put? I took a few steps in pursuit. The leaves seemed even drier than they

had been before, and in places they were a foot deep. Every step was unbelievably noisy.

"This is impossible!" I thought. "No chance of stalking under conditions like these." I sounded like a lame elephant. My feet felt twice their normal size. Returning to the oak tree, I stood behind it and faced the direction in which he had fled.

There were pauses in the wind now, and times of unusual stillness. Concentrating on nothing but listening, I still could only discern the general undercurrent of forest sounds. There was nothing that I could positively identify as a turkey.

After about an hour, I gave the caller another attempt. This time it responded beautifully. Five minutes later I sounded it again.

Like an echo, a yelp came back from across the ravine. I was astonished at how much it sounded like the racket I had just scraped off of Carl Poole's gadget. I put the contraption away and brought my shotgun into firing position.

In a few moments I saw the turkey. It was far out of range. Perhaps with a rifle there might have been a chance.

Suddenly there were *two* turkeys. My excitement increased. I kept insisting to my self that I do nothing but keep calm. I was not to move a foot or a finger. I was to hold my head perfectly still. I must not blink an eye. I even held my breath.

Then there were three turkeys. No, *four*! This was a flock; I could hear them murmuring to each other. They did not seem to be aware of me. I counted eight turkeys. They were working gradually in my direction.

It was a little unreal. My forefinger gently pushed the safety off and slid onto the trigger. One nice bird had made it almost to the bottom of the ravine and would soon be starting up the hill directly into the muzzle of my gun. He came within range. I knew he was mine. But I waited. Every casual step closer increased my odds. The remainder of the flock stretched out unevenly behind him.

At fifty yards, I knew we could pre-heat the oven. But I had lost two chances before by not obeying such rules as I had learned, and the rule in this instance dictated that I wait. So with my insides screaming, I waited.

Then there was another yelp. Loud this time, and rising in fervor until it almost became a goose-like honk. It came from high up the other side of the ravine.

The turkeys took to the air. Not all at once, but singly and in pairs. Some came from surprising places. In all, there were about fifteen. There was no time to shoot. They were flying head-on. Everyone of them.

In a flutter and crash they began to land all around me, like apples falling from a tree. In less than two seconds they had me spotted and flexed their muscles for another flight. Reflexes were driving the turkeys and reflexes had to take over the hunter.

I pointed the gun at one about fifty feet away and blasted. In that instant I knew the shot had connected. The others rocketed away amid fantastic confusion. I looked on in open-mouthed awe. Etched deep in my memory is the tawny color of sunlight through rapidly beating wings.

Since that day, I have enjoyed two more turkey seasons, bagging one each year. I know more about turkeys now, and my respect for them has greatly increased. But nothing will ever equal the feeling I had the year I started hunting for them from scratch.

How Big Did They Get? (From page 15)

when he moved to Kentucky, was 1808.

"At the time when I removed to Kentucky, turkeys were so abundant that the price of one on the market was not equal to that of a common barnyard fowl now. I have seen them offered for the sum of three pence each, the birds weighing from ten to twelve pounds. A first-rate turkey, weighing from twenty five to thirty pounds, was considered well-sold when it brought a quarter of a dollar.

"The weight of turkey hens generally averages about nine pounds. I have, however, shot barren hens in strawberry season that have weighed thirteen pounds, and have seen a few so fat as to burst open when falling from a tree when shot. Male turkeys differ more in their bulk and weight. I saw one offered for sale in the Louisville market that weighed thirty-six pounds. Its beard measured upward of a foot."

So in the early part of the last century the average wild turkey weighed about what it does now. The big ones were exceptions.

Farther in time, but nearer in distance, were the birds William Byrd wrote of in the *Histories of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina*. The date of this entry in his journal is September 23rd, 1728:

"Our hunters brought us four wild turkeys, which at this season begin to be fat and very delicious. * * * Some of them are exceedingly large, and weigh upward of forty pounds; nay, some bold historians venture to say, upwards of fifty."

His use of the word bold might imply that he shared the mistaken belief that hunters, and perhaps fishermen, sometimes stretch things a little.

Another paragraph from the same book: "That we might not be unmindful of being all along fed by Heaven in this great and solitary wilderness, we agreed to wear in our hats the Maosti, which is, in Indian, the beard of the wild turkey cock. * * * meaning that we had been supported by them in the wilderness."

Peter Kalm, on a botanical survey of northern North America for Sweden in 1750, wrote of wild turkeys in Pennsylvania: "The turkey cocks and hens run about in the forests of this country, and differ in no particular from our domestic ones, except in their superior size and redder, though more palatable, flesh."

We might note here, for the record, that the European turkeys had been imported from Mexico early in the sixteenth century, and were from stock already tamed by the Indians.

William Wood, who was in Massachusetts between 1629 and 1634, wrote: "The turkey is a very large bird * * * much larger than our English turkey. The price of a good turkey cocke is four shillings, and he is well worth it, for he may be in weight forty pounds."

The next three quotations are from *The Eyes of Discovery*, by John Bakeless. This book, compiled from the journals and letters of the early explorers, is fully documented, and is the best account of virgin North America that I have seen.

"Wild turkies in New Jersey weighed from thirty to forty pounds and, when exhausted after their short flights, could be caught with the hands."

"There was no trouble shooting wild turkies weighing from thirty to thirty-six pounds. But, though these birds

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were much larger than the few surviving wild turkeys found in American woods today, they were not nearly so large as those William Penn's colonists were to find fifty years later. * * * There are numerous fifty pound records from colonial times, far too many for all to be dismissed as hunters' optimistic guesses. John Josselyn reports forty to sixty pound birds in New England, and himself saw one that weighed thirty pounds 'when dressed and garbaged.'"

Those sixty pounders might be taken with a grain of salt. Josselyn also reported moose in Maine with an antler spread of twelve feet.

"Travellers met them running along the trail. Like wild turkeys everywhere, they were so well fed that one traveller on the Allegheny River describes them as being 'so overburthened with fat that they fly with difficulty. It frequently happens, that after shooting one out of a tree, you will find him bursted by falling on the ground.'"

I am ready to believe wild turkeys weighing up to forty-five pounds. (If you read this, Jim, come around and get your nickel.)

Why, then, are today's birds so much smaller?

A friend suggested the difference in food supply. There were chestnuts then, and forests of beech and oak everywhere.

It is true that there were more mast producing trees, but there was also more competition for their fruits. Passenger pigeons flew in hoards of incomprehensible numbers. Alexander Wilson, America's first ornithologist, described a flock which he estimated—but let's hear him tell it:

"The vast quantity of mast which these multitudes consume is a serious loss to the bears, pigs, squirrels and other dependents on the fruits of the forest. I have taken from the crop of one pigeon a good handful of the kernels of beech nuts, intermixed with acorns and chestnuts. To form a rough estimate of the daily consumption of one of these immense flocks, let us first attempt to calculate the numbers of that above mentioned, as seen in passing between Frankfort and the Indiana territory. If we suppose this column to have been one mile in breadth (and I believe it to have been much more) and that it moved at the rate of one mile in a minute, four hours, the time it continued passing, would make its whole length two hundred and forty miles. Again supposing that each square yard of this moving body comprehended three pigeons, the square yards in the whole space, multiplied by three, would give two thousand two hundred and thirty millions, two hundred and seventy-two thousand pigeons! An almost inconceivable multitude, and yet probably far below the actual amount. Computing each of these to consume half a pint of mast daily, the whole quantity, at this rate, would equal seventeen million four hundred and twenty-four thousand bushels a day!

Audubon and others made similar statements. There is no doubt of the prodigious numbers of the pigeons, nor of the amount of mast they ate. Since they could move faster than most of their competitors, we can be sure they had their share of the groceries.

Then there were squirrels. They were so plentiful, and so healthy of appetite, that bounties on them were needed to protect grain crops. In some places taxes could be paid with their scalps. Organized hunts often produced thousands from one township. Yet they were still so numerous that every few years droves of them had to make a suicidal migration to reduce the population pressure.

CONTROLLED ROADS and game management

By H. A. TRUMBO
Supervising Game Biologist

CONTROL of vehicular traffic in some manner is a necessary game management practice and is here to stay. It may have to be intensified in the future. The primary purpose of this is to lessen the human pressure on game populations. This pressure might be legal overharvest, poaching, road hunting or general disturbances. You can add extensive road damage.

The management of game species for recreational purposes, or protecting endangered species, has been largely a composite of many and varied management practices. Possibly it could be considered as emphasizing a certain practice for a period of time and later changing; either de-emphasizing or eliminating the practice. This change was not due to a haphazard design, but was necessary to meet needs current to the times.

A prime example of this can be seen in the development and management of the deer herds, particularly in the western part of the State. After almost depletion of the early herds, it became necessary to establish and enforce regulations to protect the deer that remained. This varied from closing the season entirely to very restricted seasons. This is still being done but certainly it was more critical and restrictive in the early part of the century.

Early timber harvests and uncontrolled fires created conditions favorable to deer. A stocking program was initiated in conjunction with the establishment of game sanctuaries. Both practices were essential along with the ever-important law enforcement. These continued into the mid 1950's but, in time, the sanctuaries were eliminated and stocking continued only on a limited scale.

As a result of very effective fire prevention and controlled timber cutting program by the U. S. Forest Service, habitat manipulation became an important management practice. This included creating brush and agricultural openings in the forest, development of waterholes and establishment of salt licks, to name a few. Game management units were established and personnel were assigned to these specific areas

What about those turkeys so fat they burst? Surely they were well fed.

So they were. Wild species have cycles of scarcity and abundance. There are also good and poor years for mast. A good crop of nuts in a year with relatively few eaters would account for them. The reverse condition, few nuts at a time of high populations, would result in hunger and leanness, and trigger the next low point in the cycle.

Some turkeys, like some people we know, had a tendency to get fat. As hunting pressure grew, these became the logical targets. Their genes for plumpness were roasted with them, while the lean ones lived to beget their kind. Wild turkeys were so thinned out in the east that only a very few native birds, the most streamlined and active, were left. At the same time, and by the same process, they were honed from a relatively tame and unsuspicious species to what they are now—just about the sharpest things in the woods.

Some abandoned logging access roads are planted to wildlife foods and permanently blocked.



to do the management work. This provided added protection to the deer herds as well as other game.

With the growth and expansion of the deer populations it became essential to liberalize the seasons and establish access roads for hunters into areas of high deer concentrations. This was necessary to keep the herds in balance with the range conditions.

In all probability we have reached the point beyond which deer will not, or cannot, increase (except in certain areas) and hunting pressure continues to increase. Still, it is necessary to construct a certain number of roads for various forest uses.

This brings us to the time and place where we must consider controlled roads as having a big influence on game populations, not only deer. These roads must be considered as a potent game management tool and used as such. This will also promote "quality hunting," if you want to be considered sportsmen.

Roads under consideration for control, or to be considered, could be placed in three categories:

1. Proposed new construction. Will all intended uses be compatible?
2. Those to be opened during specific hunting seasons and closed during periods of time when there is no season on National Forest and Commission-owned lands.
3. Roads to be blocked permanently except when used in connection with some land management practice.

Many in the last category will be used as foot access trails and, where possible, they will be seeded to provide additional game food. This will prevent further destruction of

a road that is not needed for vehicular traffic.

Most of the examples used were related to deer management but many are even more applicable to other game species such as grouse and turkeys. With these, "road hunting" is very prevalent and poaching is made easier.

It is extremely important that large areas be free of open access roads in the preservation of the black bear. This must continue to be a prime consideration.

There are areas close to high population centers that would become over-used and probably depleted of game species if opened to all types of travel. An example is the Havens Management Area one mile from Salem and not much farther from Roanoke. Populations of most game species on the area are considered only fair and, at the present, walk-in hunting is permitted. With its location and game populations free vehicular traffic could only be detrimental.

We are very fortunate to have a few remaining native trout streams in the mountainous part of the state. But in order to preserve and keep something so fine and irreplaceable as these native brook trout, vehicular access into and along these streams must be very restrictive or prevented.

These controlled roads are not, and would not be, intended to deny anyone of anything, but used as a sound management practice. Our game species would have more protection and yet provide the same hunting opportunities for more people.

As in the other related game management practices, road construction and use was important and, in most cases, good. But now it is necessary to change and time for the pendulum to begin its swing back.

Roads such as this should be gated to control vehicular use during closed seasons and spells of adverse weather.



WINTER USE OF AUTUMN OLIVE

By JACK W. RAYBOURNE

Game Biologist

THE use of autumn olive fruit (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) by game birds and animals in the early fall is well known generally, but few probably are aware that this productive bush also furnishes winter food. The fruit that cluster heavily on nearly every limb generally drop to the ground shortly following the first fall frost. Certain later maturing varieties manage to hold their fruit a little longer, but the writer knows of none at this time that can consistently hold its fruit through November in Virginia.

It is generally assumed that after the fruit have fallen the value of autumn olive is gone until the next year, but it now appears that for several months after the tart, red, juicy flesh has disappeared the large single seed present in each small fruit remains on the ground to provide a ready source of winter food.

In an effort to see how long, and in what quantities, the seeds remain available, Virginia Game Commission personnel began a small study in the fall of 1968 to sample autumn olive plots on the Gathright Wildlife Management Area in Bath County, Virginia. The area contains 12- to 13-year-old plantings of both early and late maturing varieties of autumn olive which yearly produce an abundance of fruit. The early maturing variety drops its fruit usually during the first or second week of October and the fruit of the later variety drops usually during the last two weeks of November.

The little study which followed was one of those which did not seem important enough to warrant spending a great amount of time or money on, but at the same time it was information we wanted to know. Therefore it was decided to make the collections following our monthly research meetings on the area, and we would screen out the seeds at home in the evenings. Though this little study was simple in nature and quickly planned we still wanted to approach it in a way that the information would be meaningful, accurate, and useful.

Seed quantities were determined by collecting randomly selected one-square-foot soil samples (4 plots 6" x 6" x 1" deep) from beneath two bushes of each variety each month. The two bushes of each variety selected were flagged with marking tape to insure that we would sample the same bushes each time. The two early varieties were combined for analysis each month as were the late varieties. The soil material, debris, insect pupae, etc., were removed by passing the samples through different size screens until only the autumn olive seeds remained. The current year's seeds in each sample were then counted and divided by the number of samples taken to find the average number of seeds per sample. The shiny light-brown seed of the current year is easily distinguished from the weathered, black, usually-hollow seed of the previous year.

The fruit and seeds which dot the ground amount to only a fraction of the fruit that was present on the bushes. Quail, turkeys, grouse, songbirds, deer and black bear take

a heavy toll of the tart fruits before they mature and fall to the ground. I have seen turkeys break the tops out of autumn olive bushes as they attempt to alight in the branches and strip the fruit. Quail and grouse also have been flushed from beneath the bushes in the fall. "Sign" evidenced by tracks, claw marks and a demolished bush leaves little doubt that black bears have developed a taste for autumn olive, too! The bush quickly recovers, however, providing new sprout growth relished by deer.

Even after heavy feeding by wildlife, large amounts of the fruit manage to fall to the ground where the pulpy flesh quickly decomposes leaving behind the large single seed. First samples collected in early December as soon as the fruit of the late maturing variety had fallen indicated that a sizable quantity of seeds remained. The early variety samples averaged 140 seeds per square-foot compared to 114 for the late variety. Normally it would be expected that the variety dropping its seeds last would have more seeds present on the ground, but last year the earlier variety simply produced more fruit, accounting for the larger number of seeds present. This difference didn't bother us, though, because we were more interested in how long the seeds remained available and what used them than in how many seeds were present. The fact that seeds continued to be present in the samples was our main concern. The number of seeds present each month dropped rapidly to 66 and 43 seeds per square foot for the early and late varieties respectively, by the first week in March.

What definitely consumed the seeds during the succeeding months was not determined. Meadow mice, quail, wild turkeys, and a variety of seed-eating songbirds have been observed beneath autumn olive bushes during the winter months, but we could not say with certainty that they were taking the seeds. "Scratching" and other ground disturbance was noted, indicating a search for something beneath the bushes, so it might be safe to assume that at least some of the seeds were consumed. Future examination of the crops ("craws") of the birds and stomach contents of the mammals should give us some answers. In any event, . . . *something* reduced the seed numbers until only 2 seeds per square foot for the early variety and no seeds of the late variety remained by the first of May. The June samples which followed contained no seeds for either variety, and the collections were discontinued.

Certainly this wasn't a "high-powered" study, but we did find out some information that we wanted to know. Aside from the fall fruit usage, we now know that the seeds of the autumn olive plant are a potential food source for wildlife. We now know that seeds of both early and late maturing varieties persist during the winter, spring and early summer months, and some are present from the preceding year. We also know that some wildlife species do utilize the seeds. We may not know which ones yet, but we're working on it!

Hunting Coon (Continued from page 7)

tion of the searchlight of an airport a few miles away.

We headed in that general direction, gingerly stepping along a fence row to avoid knee-deep ponds. The barbed-wire fence followed the edge of some woods in the direction we were headed. Some land was dry enough for us to leave the protection of the fence, but we had to be constantly alert to the confrontation of water. Soon we came to a muddy road and carefully stepped along the higher banks of the road until again we were met by water, a huge pond that swallowed the road ahead.

We felt frustrated for beyond the pond we heard the faint barks of the dogs. After some moments, the more adventuresome Buster took the lantern and skirted along another fence which acted as a bridge. Mike and I took to a wooded section in the opposite direction in hopes of finding a land route to the dogs.

In this spirit of Columbus and Marco Polo, Mike and I set out along the edge of the patch which separated us from a field, beyond which the dogs were treeing, hopefully, a coon.

We found a fence running through a swamp in the desired direction. Mike, using both hands, crawled along on the barbed-wire barrier and disappeared in the darkness. I, hampered with camera equipment, did not attempt to follow in Mike's footsteps. I tried wading shallow patches from tree to tree, but the water became too deep and I was forced to retrace my steps back to the road and to follow Buster's way. At least I would be able to walk on dry land, using the fence to hang onto and guard myself against a premature Saturday night bath.

In this manner I crept to the opposite bank beyond where I found Buster, who had returned from the site where the dogs had treed a coon. He directed me down the road. We came to a plank that Buster had found and placed across a small canal formed by the rains and which bordered an expansive corn field.

We clomped across the field, the mud sticking to our boots in cakes and making our steps tedious. Once during the heavy walking, my feet became entangled in a stalk and I was thrown headlong into the mud, my satchel flying before me. Luckily, there was no damage done and we continued on.

A distant light shot up a small tree. Mike had arrived and was acting as beacon. The barking of the dogs became more heated as we approached. We could by now observe a small black clump in the tree. It was the faint silhouette of the raccoon cast against the lighter gray sky.

We had to conclude this coon must have sought the nearest available tree to get up off the ground away from the dogs, instead of attempting to find a tall tree in which to hide. We concluded this because there, maybe 20 feet up, just as plain and apparent as could be, was this coon, hanging onto the branches of a swaying and unsturdy maple.

The yelping dogs below increased their froth.

"The coon dog's got to hate the coon or he wouldn't want to kill him," Hender has said. "But that's the object of the hunt: to listen to the chase and see the dogs and coon fight. Most times the coon can whip a young dog. It takes a dog with a lot of guts to kill a big, wise ole coon."

Soon after arriving at the maple, Buster announced he was going to indulge in his specialty. Mike's flashlight played on the coon as it looked down quizzically at the invading *Homo sapiens*. When Buster got ten feet from

the coon, it did something Buster said no mountain coon had ever done—the masked mammal growled at him.

Discretion being the better part of valor, Buster dismissed the idea of knocking the animal out of the tree and, instead, started swaying the maple back and forth. The tempo of swaying built up to the point where the tree resembled some giant piano timer ticking stick.

The disturbed coon started down and, when the tree became too vibrant, jumped just missing Buster and falling into the water below.

Hender wants a challenge for his dogs, which means a long hard chase. Sometimes he has left the house at 7:30 and been back by 9 o'clock with what he calls "a ten



Buster Saul climbs after treed coon.

minute coon."

"But you try harder to get a wise coon—one that will give you a good chase. Some hunters just go for the chase and forget the kill. I've often left young coons in a tree," Hender explained.

But how long before a dog learns to track and combat this denizen of the North American woods, this creature the Indians labeled "a little man"?

"You start dogs out young with good company," Hender said. "But chances are one in ten a dog will turn out to be an outstanding coon dog because a dog's got to be smart.

(Continued on next page)

Hunting Coon (Continued from page 21)

There's no limit what people will pay for a coon dog with brains. The average hound is worth \$100 to \$300, but I have known them to sell for as much as \$9,000.

"But there's no such thing as a perfect coon dog. Every hound has a flaw. How a dog is judged depends on what a person wants out of a dog. Every hunter has his favorite dog and I guess Smokey's mine," Hender confessed. "He's an outstanding strike dog. He's always first to hit the trail, but Red is a harder tree dog. He'll sit all night if he has to. Smokey can't be still for long."

Hender's dogs are trained to run by themselves. Some hunters must lead their hounds to coon tracks along a creek, or take them to ridge crossings before letting them loose to find a trail. But if Hender's dogs don't strike, they return to the car and the slobbering, whining beasts are put into the car and moved to a new location.

The weather also has a lot to do with a hunter's success in getting his coon. If the wind blows, or if the moon's bright, a coon won't be out roaming much. The wind hinders his hearing and may stir up leaves and make him think something's after him. The lunar glow exposes the coon and

Hender Saul and his dogs (left to right), Smokey, Sam and Red.



Camp Pickett (Continued from page 8)

support for units of the Army, its reserve components, and other government agencies.

Last year 1,700 acres of land in a training area were cleared to facilitate maneuverability, and in keeping with the emphasis on resource conservation and management the land was planted to provide wildlife food and cover and prevent soil erosion. An additional 800 acres of old fields and unproductive woodlands were similarly treated. Wildlife food plantings are in evidence throughout the entire reservation.

Hunters have access to 31,000 acres of the reservation (the remainder being closed for safety reasons) where last year, during over 8,000 man-days of hunting, sportsmen bagged deer, quail, squirrels, rabbits and other game.

Fishermen hooked largemouth bass, bluegills, channel catfish and other species in the 519 acres of managed lakes and ponds and 12 miles of streams on the area.

All hunting and fishing areas are open to the general public on a first-come first-served basis at no charge, when use of the facilities does not interfere with training schedules.

makes him feel insecure.

Cold weather and snow also restricts a coon's night life. However, if the coons feel secure, they may venture out in late afternoon and some people hunt them then.

No matter what the weather, however, hunger will eventually force the raccoon out of its den—though it may be late at night by that time. The raccoon, an Indian name meaning "he who scratches," eats acorns, corn, apples and grapes. Normally, raccoons are too slow to catch fish, though they may trap them in shallow pools. The most common coon food is crayfish. Because of this preference, raccoons (and otter) help keep trout population high because crayfish feed on this fish's eggs.

Den trees are a boon to the chased coon. These are dead, hollowed out trees where they find sanctuary. It is unlawful to smoke out a coon from one of these trees or to cut down the tree in quest of the furry fugitive.

"To show you how smart they are," recalled Hender, "we ran up a coon into a hollow tree and after awhile I shined a light up at the hole and you could see right through it and there was a hair hanging down in front of the hole. The coon had jumped clean through the hole onto another tree. I guess he figured we'd think he was still inside."

Sometimes coons are able to stay hidden in a tree that's not a den tree.

"I've stood under a tree for hours and not been able to see a raccoon in it, but just know he's up there," Hender revealed. "We stayed at the bottom of one tree until dawn one time and when it got light we were able to spot him standing straight up next to the trunk, his nose pointed to the sky and one foot on one limb and the other on another branch."

Hender is a strong advocate of coon hunting as a sport for the young. It's one way of keeping the youngsters off the street and gives them a lifelong interest.

"I tell you, I love it," he confessed. "You get out one night and it's all quiet and you see the Milky Way and then you hear the hounds barking. To those who don't know or care about coon hunting it's a mere racket.

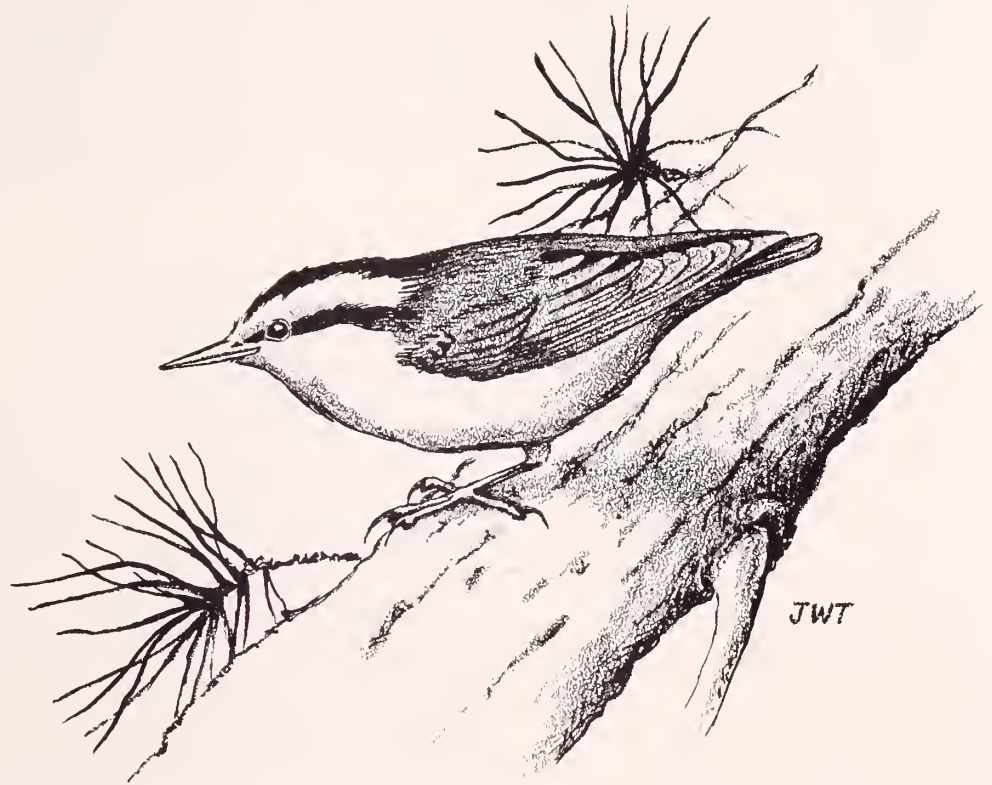
"To me it's music."



Ft. Lee Quartermaster Center photo by F. Phillips & H. Washington

Virginia Game Commission chairman Custis L. Coleman (left) greets Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird at Camp Pickett after award presentation ceremony.

Bird
of
the
Month:



Red-breasted Nuthatch

By DR. J. J. MURRAY
Lexington

THE Red-breasted Nuthatch, *Sitta canadensis* Linnaeus, is one of our smallest and most active birds. It is smaller than the White-breasted Nuthatch and about the size of the little Brown-headed Nuthatch, which is a bird of the low country.

As we go from east to west across Virginia, we find it increasing in numbers. It is an uncommon fall migrant and winter visitor in the Norfolk area. At Charlottesville it is more common, from September 15 to late April. A May 17 record near Charlottesville may indicate nesting, but is not proof. At Lynchburg it is a fairly common transient and an irregular winter resident, more common in fall. It is a fairly common winter visitor at Lexington, from September 8 to April 30.

On June 29, 1954, I found it in scattered spruce at Locust Spring in the northeastern corner of Highland County, where, though no nest was located, it was evidently

breeding. Of its status in Highland County Maurice Brooks wrote in *The Raven* of November-December 1935 that the red-breasted nuthatch "Occurs on Alleghany Backbone in the breeding season wherever there is good sized standing spruce." Since there is not much spruce left in our state, the red-breasted nuthatch is certainly much less common as a nester in Virginia than it was formerly.

This little nuthatch is smaller than its relative, the white-breasted nuthatch, by half an inch to an inch. In a creature as small as any nuthatch half an inch, of course, makes a good deal of difference. As Roger Tory Peterson has pointed out, no other of our nuthatches has a wide black line through the eye, bordered above by white. It is a trim, beautiful little bird.

It is to be hoped that Virginia can keep its spruce woods, both for the beauty of these forests and for the continuation in our state of the birds whose presence depends on spruce.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By TONY PHOENIX
Waynesboro



DOVE HUNTING'S TOO EASY!

HERMAN was waiting for me at his front gate on opening day of dove season. I wish he'd waited inside the house, or, better yet, I wish I'd picked him up after dark the night before.

This was his first dove hunt, and it showed. He wore a one-piece suit of bright orange material, made to step into and zip up like a garage mechanic's coveralls. He had the hood pulled tight with drawstrings and his head in it. The shamelessly bright outfit had served him well last fall on his first deer hunt. He pointed out, quite correctly, that even in the middle of the George Washington National Forest he could be seen from a distance of three miles.

It was too close to opening hour of the new season to ask him to go back in the house and change. Besides, I reasoned, the bright orange suit would scare away every dove within a mile of him. At the end of the day he'd be eternally grateful for my advice on what to wear next time.

"Bought a new gun today," he said proudly as he climbed into the car. "I told the clerk I needed an all-round gun. This little beauty is what he recommended." I glanced around and choked on my pipe smoke. "This little beauty" was a single-shot .410 gauge shotgun, a most unlikely weapon for any man to begin his dove hunting career with. Many hunters won't get near a .410. They consider it a sissy gun because of its low power and range. I smiled an indulgent smile and mumbled something about "That's nice." I'd show him. Oh, he'd be begging for my advice when this hunt was over.

When we got to a field where I knew corn had been cut, I sent Herman to one side of a small hill while I took the other. I thought as he waddled away in his bright suit that he'd look right at home hitching reindeer at the North Pole. I was ready to give odds that no dove would fly anywhere close to him. That's why I sent him to the other side of the hill.

For the next two hours the shooting was great. Doves

wheeled and swooped from all directions. I stood and fired, went back to a crouch, stood and fired until I had a limit of 18 birds. I'd fired my automatic nearly 75 times. No matter, I had my limit. First day too. Only occasionally had I heard Herman's little .410 pop. I chuckled as I picked up my birds and headed across the hill. The time of reckoning had arrived. Now I'd get the opportunity to explain to him the finer points of dove shooting.

Finding him was no trouble. He was so bright he looked like the sun coming up in the middle of the cornfield. But as I came closer my amusement turned to wonder and then shock. There were birds on the ground around him. Dove-type birds. Eighteen of them. Herman had his limit and he'd only fired 18 times!

I started shooting questions but he didn't want to talk

about it. Something about the matter was bothering him. He walked back to the car in silence. On the way I replayed for him some of the impossible shots I'd made, fully illustrated with swooping, diving hand maneuvers. He stared straight ahead, his mind elsewhere.

Suddenly he interrupted. "This dove hunting's just too easy," he said, as if he were in deep thought. I coughed, but really didn't have to. "When those 18 birds came zooming across the hill from you to me," he continued, "they'd suddenly stop, or almost stop, as if they were confused. There's no sport in this kind of shooting."

I chewed on this a bit. How could a first-time dove hunter find it so easy? Why, veterans of the game often moaned and pulled their hair in frustration and had to be put away for long rests after a week of trying to hit doves. Then it dawned on me: Herman's hunting outfit! And Herman in it with the hood pulled tight around his head! The doves had never seen anything like it. They were shocked into immobility. When they came streaking over the hill at 60 mph and ran smack over Herman, they came to a screeching halt, as it were, in midair.

Now he was struggling with a way to even up the odds for the birds. I saw him get it. "I've got it!" he almost shouted. "The next time I go dove hunting I'll use my cousin's single shot .22."

I told him it's illegal to hunt migratory game birds with a rifle. This set him to thinking again.

I suspected, however, that he was running out of possibilities when he asked if they made 00 buckshot for .410s. I knew then that I'd have to tell him about the outfit he was wearing, and I did too, but it took me nearly a week to work up nerve to do it.

He changed to camouflage. His percentage of hits took an immediate nosedive, as I thought it would. Nevertheless, he seems perfectly happy now as an average dove shot, whatever that is.



Edited by HARRY GILLAM

Mercury Prompts Fishing Ban on North Fork Holston River

The Virginia State Department of Health closed the North Fork of the Holston River in late September from Saltville to the Tennessee line to all fishing because of mercury contamination. Some 90 percent of the fish collected had mercury concentrations in excess of .05 milligrams per kilogram, established as maximum for safe human consumption by the Food and Drug Administration. It is understood that Tennessee has likewise closed a portion of the stream within its borders.

Laboratory tests were run on the fish in the suspected portion of the stream by the Federal Water Quality Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and the State Water Control Board to determine the extent of the contamination. Fishing in the prohibited waters is considered a misdemeanor and is punishable accordingly.

Game, Fish, Boat Law Arrests Total 7,878

A total of 7,878 persons were arrested for violation of Virginia's game, fish and boat laws during the 1969-70 fiscal year, according to R. S. Purks, Assistant Law Enforcement Chief for the Virginia Game Commission. Fishing violations were most prevalent, accounting for 3,452 of the total. There were also 3,253 arraigned for violation of the game laws and 1,173 apprehended for boat law violations. Fines and costs assessed for these infractions totaled \$186,238.60, with an additional \$7,276 levied for replacement of 609 game animals and fish illegally taken. This included 140 bass, 200 trout and 70 deer. Confiscated were 47 guns, 3 vehicles and 11 lights.

Game wardens spent 336,994 hours pursuing their various duties, which included enforcement, assistance with game and fish management and research work, and public relations commitments. They traveled over 31¼ million miles by road and 107,894 miles by boat.

His 'n Hers Trophies



Mr. & Mrs. S. V. Yearwood of Hampton are shown with their big game trophies taken last season. Although she matched him point for point with a 6 pointer, he managed to bag a 4 pointer, making him two for the season.

Worthless Swamp Worth \$3,043 Per Acre Per Year

A recent study of the Alcovy River Swamp in northern Georgia conducted by Georgia State University estimates the value of the 2,300 acre wetland at \$3.013 per acre per year to the public in its natural state. The accumulated benefits are expected to exceed \$130 million over the next hundred years. The U. S. Soil Conservation Service proposes to channelize the Alcovy and drain the swamp as part of a small watershed project under public law 566. This would increase timber production about \$5 per acre per year. Conservationists want the Alcovy to become a state Scenic River.

The 48 page report, entitled "Southern River Swamp—A Multiple Use Environment," was authored by Charles H. Wharton, professor of biology at the University. It stresses the cleansing and life-giving value of southern river swamps. Aside from ecological considerations, Wharton states that it is fundamentally wrong to expend tax monies

for non-essential help to private citizens, while the pleas of public agencies and professionals are ignored. He suggests the following emergency action to curb the alarming rate of watershed modification: a moratorium on channelization, an inventory of inland wetlands, tax relief for swampland owners, a wetlands easement fund to compensate owners, and an inland wetland act. He concludes that even a "win some, lose some" philosophy is now unacceptable in handling our dwindling wetland resources.

Bird Watchers Invited to Participate in Thanksgiving Count

Virginia Wildlife readers who enjoy watching birds at their feeders are invited by the Lynchburg Bird Club to donate their talents to science by participating in the 5th Annual Thanksgiving Window Watch Bird Count on November 26, 1970. Participants are to observe their feeders for one hour any time on Thanksgiving Day and record the numbers and species of birds seen. The information gathered is tabulated and stored in a computer so it can be compared with other years to determine trends in bird populations. The 1970 count will be the fifth sponsored by the Lynchburg Bird club and the Carry Nature Sanctuary of Sweet Briar College.

Last year several hundred watchers in Virginia and other states took part, spending an interesting hour watching and recording the birds at their feeders and mailing in their tallies. Persons interested in participating should write for an official tally sheet and instructions to Dr. Ernest P. Edwards, Sweet Briar, Va. 21595.

Observers last year found the cardinal and blue jay the most common visitors but they recorded many others. The record went to an observer who tallied 22 species during the hour. Dr. Edwards emphasizes that while large lists are fun for the observer, every list is valuable to the research project whether it includes many birds or just a few.



Edited by ANN PILCHER

Safety Instruction: Summer and Winter

Each campsite at Goshen Scout Camps, in the mountains between Staunton and Lexington, has a front on beautiful Lake Merriweather and ground enough for 12 scout troops. Upon entering the grounds you pass Camp Olmstead, Camp Bowman's entrance is just beyond the dam that compounds water for the lake. Following the beltway around the lake you pass Camps PMI, Marriott, Baird and Ross. Each of the sites has its own rifle and archery range.

Rifle ranges are built against earth fills, with a distance of fifty feet from firing line to target. Each range can accommodate eight scouts at a firing. Firing points are covered and have pads for prone shooting. Ammunition is sold in lots of five rounds to the boys, who wait in line for their turn to shoot. At Goshen this summer over 1,000 Scouts completed the Hunter Safety Course and many completed Rifle and Shotgun Merit Badge requirements.

As Hunter Safety Instructor for Virginia and Maryland, this writer will offer instruction this winter for both children and adults. The need is great and the time is ripe for out and out safety with firearms. For further particulars you may contact your local Game Commissioner or State Safety Officer Jim Kerrick, Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, P. O. Box 11101, Richmond, Virginia 23230.

Many retired persons have a great opportunity to get in the Safety game by becoming instructors. A poem by C. E. Flynn may be applied to those who are retired and have no dream:

"A man is as great as the dreams he dreams,

As great as the love he bears,

As great as the values he redeems
And the happiness he shares.

A man is as great as the thoughts he thinks.

As the worth he has attained.

As the fountains at which his spirit drinks

And the insights he has gained.

A man is as great as the truth he speaks,
As great as the help he gives.

Summer String



Earth Day Follow-Up Project

HOW DOES THE COMMON WILDLIFE IN YOUR AREA SURVIVE?

Make a survey of the area, indoors and outdoors, in order to compile a checklist of wildlife. Appoint observers to note their habits. Then the group can be divided into teams, each of which will concentrate on one or more kinds of wildlife, observing food habits, avoidance of enemies, protection against unfavorable conditions, and the extent to which help from man is needed. Find out what forms of wildlife are considered "pests" in your community. Why might pests differ from area to area? Check on what is being done to control pests by your local official agencies and by citizens' organizations. Then let the group supplement or assist existing efforts. Draw up and carry out a group program to help eliminate pests. (Remember that you must have all such activities approved by proper authorities.) You might also try attracting desirable wildlife with brushpiles, bird feeders, bird baths, etc.

(Publisher's Services, Inc.
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Philadelphia, Pa. 19102)

TEACHERS' AND
LEADERS' GUIDE.
Aug./Sept. 1970

As great as the destiny he seeks
And as great as the life he lives."

Adopt a philosophy that will give you a feeling of worth and of value to your fellow man.

—JAMES K. HALL

525 N. Monroe St., Arlington

Jimmy Flint's lunker smallmouth came from the James River. Registered in Lexington, the 5 lb. 8 oz. bass exceeded freshwater citation minimum weight by a pound and a half.

"Eat Crow"

I'm sure everybody's heard the expression "eat crow." It is used mostly when someone has made a mistake and has to admit it.

While at my grandfather's house in White Stone, Virginia, I shot a crow. When I got back to his house I taxidermied the crow to use later for a decoy and put its body into a crab trap. That night my grandfather and I got to discussing the expression "eat crow." I asked him if he knew how the saying got started and he said that for all he knew it might be delicious. So we decided to eat the next crow I shot.

Next day we went out in his boat on Anti-Poison Creek and I shot a crow. I went home and skinned it, saving the skin for later. My grandmother cooked it and we all loved it.

I am sending this letter in so people will know that "eating crow" can be enjoyable.

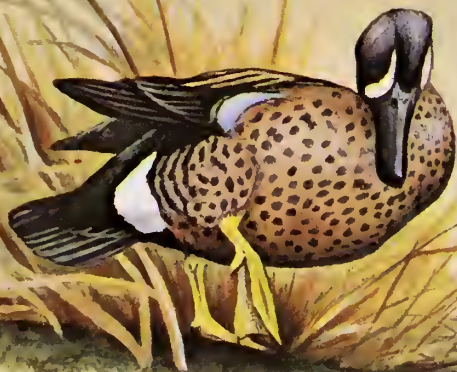
GRANDMOTHER'S RECIPE—GOOD!

Marinate cut-up crow in sauterne or any other dry white wine. Pack pieces snugly in casserole dish and barely cover with the wine (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup). Cover and refrigerate for three hours or longer. One hour before serving place crow in shallow baking dish. Measure $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of oil and mix oil with wine used for marinating. Pour over crow so that the bottom of the pan is well covered. Save remainder for basting or to add to the pan to prevent the crow from burning.

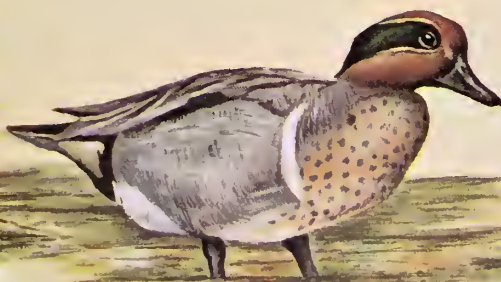
Sprinkle about $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of the following spices over the crow: thyme, marjoram, garlic powder, rosemary, dried parsley, salt and pepper (add more if you want). Place in oven heated to 350 degrees. Allow this to remain for 25 minutes. At the end of this time turn crow over and repeat herbs as above. Return to oven for 20 minutes. Watch to make sure pan does not become too dry. Serve with rice, using pan juices as gravy. If the crow is not sufficiently brown, broil briefly.

CHARLES R. ADCOCK, *McLean*

SHALLOW WATER DUCKS



BLUE-WINGED TEAL



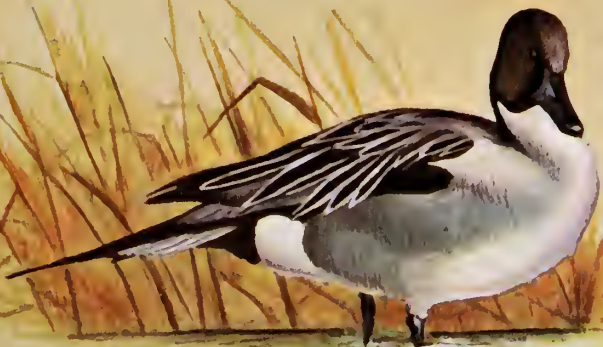
GREEN-WINGED TEAL



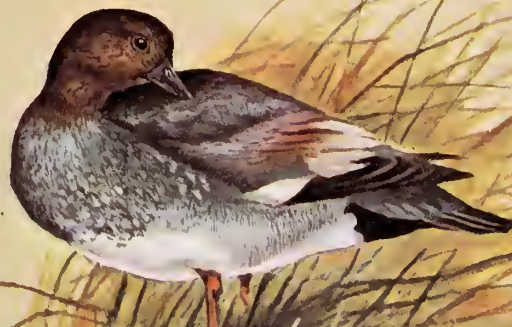
MALLARD



BLACK DUCK



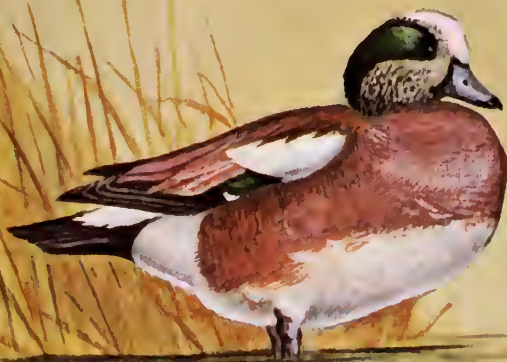
PINTAIL



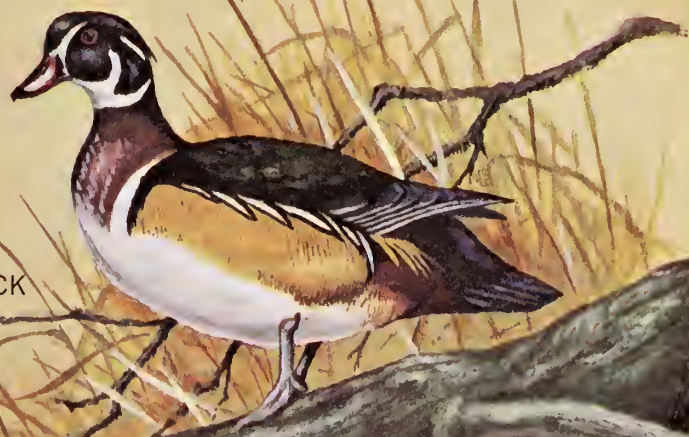
GADWALL



SHOVELLER



WIDGEON



WOOD DUCK

SEX EDUCATION FOR PHEASANT HUNTERS



DON'T SHOOT!

Hens appear almost uniformly brown in flight, usually look smaller than males, and usually have shorter tails. They remain fully protected.



**LEGAL GAME, ONE PER DAY,
NOVEMBER 16 AND 17 ONLY**

Gaudily colored males with tails often as long as the rest of their bodies are easy to distinguish from hens. Take a moment to make sure of your target before you shoot. All birds shot must be taken to a game checking station.